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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 OMB-01 AID-20 DPW-01 SR-02

ORM-03 SCCT-02 DRC-01 /167 W
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O R 301720Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2574
INFO USINT ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USINT DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IS, SY
SUBJ: INITIAL ISRAELI REACTIONS TO ACHIEVEMENT OF
SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT

1. SUMMARY. ISRAELI PRESS AND POPULAR REACTION TO SYRIAN-
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ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT IS MOSTLY VERY FAVORABLE WITH

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ONLY THE TWO RIGHTIST-INCLINED AFTERNOON PAPERS STRIKING QUALIFIED NOTE. MOST PRESS COMMENTS FOCUS ON AGREEMENT AS MAJOR US DIPLOMATIC ACHIEVEMENT. IN ASSESSING ITS BENEFITS FOR ISRAEL, COMMENTATORS EMPHASIZE THAT IT CONSTITUTES ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO RENEWAL OF FULL-SCALE WAR ON GOLAN, OPENS UP PROSPECT OF FURTHER MOVEMENT TOWARD A SETTLEMENT WITH EGYPT, AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE MAINTENANCE OF POSITIVE US-ISRAELI RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. REACTION OF MAN-IN-THE-STREET TO NEWS THAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT DAMPENED BY PROTRACTED NATURE OF NEGOTIATIONS AND BY HAVING HEARD MANY FALSE ALARMS, IS BROADLY FAVORABLE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN SERIES OF SHORT INTER-VIEWS ON TV LAST NIGHT, NINE OUT OF TEN INTERVIEWED LOOKED UPON AGREEMENT AS MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT OF CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT FOR ISRAEL.

3. AS FOR PRESS, DAVAR CHARACTERIZES ACHIEVEMENT OF SYRIAN-ISRAELI
DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT AS "A POLITICAL EVENT OF THE FIRST ORDER...OF MORE THAN REGIONAL IMPORTANCE." WHILE NOTING THAT FROM ISRAELI VIEWPOINT IT IS NOT IDEAL, EDITORIALIST CONTINUES THAT SYRIA HAS BACKED DOWN CONSIDERABLY FROM HER ORIGINAL DEMANDS AND THAT NEW ISRAELI DEFENSE LINE IS NO WORSE THAN OLD ONE WAS. DISENGAGEMENT MUST NOW BE FOLLOWED BY ALL-OUT EFFORT TO REALIZE THE PROSPECTS OF A STABLE CEASE-FIRE AND OF PROGRESS TOWARD BROADER SETTLEMENT. AT SAME TIME, ISRAEL MUST CONTINUE TO BOLSTER ITS MILITARY STRENGTH; "BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH US ACCOMPANYING THE ISRAELI-SYRIAN AGREEMENT SHOULD SERVE AS AN INSTRUMENT TO THAT END."

4. HAARETZ COMMENTS EDITORIALLY: "MEASURED BY THE ORIGINAL SYRIAN DEMANDS--AND THAT IS THE RIGHT YARDSTICK--IT MAY BE SAID THAT THE CONCESSIONS ISRAEL HAS MADE LEAVE ITS POSITION ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS INTACT FROM THE SECURITY VIEWPOINT. THE GOVERNMENT THEREFORE CAN TELL THE KNESSET WITH A GOOD CONSCIENCE THAT IT HAS ACHIEVED ALL THAT WAS POSSIBLE." IN BROADER TERMS, AGREEMENT HAS GIVEN EGYPT MORE "ELBOW-ROOM" FOR REACHING COMPREHENSIVE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL. ISRAEL IS ENTITLED TO EXPECT THAT WASHINGTON WILL SHOW ITS APPRECIATION FOR
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GOI ATTITUDE AND THAT CONTINUED AND INCREASED AID WILL COMPENSATE FOR ADVANTAGES SYRIANS MAY HAVE OBTAINED.

5. DAVAR CORRESPONDENT ISRAEL NEUMAN, IN LENGTHY ENCONIUM SAYS "THE AGREEMENT IS A DIPLOMATIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE FIRST MAGNITUDE FOR PRESIDENT NIXON WHICH ENSURES FOR DR KISSINGER AN OUTSTANDING PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF THE 20TH CENTURY; IT IS NOT A PRESENT THAT ISRAEL HAS MADE THEM DUE TO

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LACK OF ALTERNATIVE OR IN RECOGNITION OF WHAT THEY DID IN THE PAST. THE AGREEMENT AS A WHOLE HAS TO STAND THE TEST OF ITS BENEFIT FOR ISRAEL...THE STEP ISRAEL HAS MADE IS IN THE DIRECTION OF PEACE." GOI DID NOT "GO TO CANOSSA" AS RIGHTWING OPPOSITION CLAIMS BUT PREFERRED TO TAKE CHANCE OF CHANGING MIDEAST ATMOSPHERE THOROUGHLY RATHER THAN CONFRONT CERTAINTY OF QUICK ESCALATION TOWARD NEW AND MORE TERRIBLE WARS THAN THOSE OF PAST. GOI IS NOT JUST GOING THROUGH DIPLOMATIC NICETIES IN EXPRESSING APPRECIATION OF PEOPLE FOR ISRAEL FOR "MAN WHO DID NOT HESITATE TO BREAK EVERY RULE OF DIPLOMATIC PROTOCOL AND POLITICAL ROUTINE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE AN APPARENTLY IMPOSSIBLE MISSION." ALLEGATION THAT GOI SUBMITTED TO US PRESSURE IS "FAIRY TALE." GOI BARGAINED HARD ON EVERY SINGLE CLAUSE.

6. AL HAMISHMAR COMMENTS FAVORABLY ON AGREEMENT, NOTING THAT NATION WELCOMES IT WITH RELIEF, AND UNDERSTANDS THAT IT MUST USE THE OPPORTUNITY GIVEN TO IT TO BUILD UP ITS STRENGTH AND SEEK WAYS OF PROGRESSING TOWARDS FURTHER PEACE AGREEMENTS. ISRAEL HAS NOT GIVEN UP ANY JEWISH SETTLEMENTS ON HEIGHTS AND HAS RETAINED STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT HILLS. "HOWEVER, PROOF OF THE PUDDING WILL BE IN THE EATING, AND SYRIA'S DECLARED AIMS AND REFUSAL TO BAN SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES MUST BE VIEWED WITH SUSPICION, THOUGH RELAXATION OF TENSION HAS ITS OWN DYNAMIC WHICH MAY LEAD, HOWEVER SLOWLY, IN THE DIRECTION OF FURTHER AGREEMENTS."

7. HATZOFE WELCOMES AGREEMENT AS END TO WAR OF ATTRITION AND BECAUSE FAILURE TO ACHIEVE IT MIGHT WELL HAVE MEANT FULL-SCALE WAR. "ISRAEL IS GRATEFUL TO DR KISSINGER FOR HIS IMMENSE AND UNPRECEDENTED EFFORT TO ACHIEVE AN AGREEMENT WHICH, WITH ALL THE MISGIVINGS THAT IT AROUSES, BRINGS A CEASE-FIRE, THE RETURN OF THE PRISONERS, AND PROSPECTS FOR A FUTURE SETTLEMENT.

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O R 301720Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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INFO USINT ALGIERS
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AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USINT DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
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WHETHER THESE PROSPECTS ARE REALIZED WILL DEPEND IN LARGE MEASURE ON US INSISTENCE THAT THE AGREEMENT IS IMPLEMENTED AND THAT DAMASCUS DOES NOT USE IT TO FURTHER ITS WAR AIMS." LIKE EVERY AGREEMENT, IT HAS PLUSES AND MINUSES, BUT FORMER PREVAIL. MAIN SHADOW IS THAT DAMASCUS DOES NOT SEE IT AS STEP ON WAY TO PEACE BUT AS FIRST STAGE IN PROCESS THAT EVENTUALLY
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MUST LEAD TO ELIMINATION OF ISRAEL. ISRAEL HAS HAD TO ACCEPT COMPROMISE IN FORM OF AN AMERICAN GUARANTEE, WHICH, WHILE RECOGNIZING ISRAEL'S RIGHT OF REPRISAL, HAS DISADVANTAGE OF INVOLVING NEED FOR AMERICAN PERMISSION TO REACT TO MURDER COMMITTED ON ISRAEL'S SOVEREIGN TERRITORY.

8. YEDIOT AHARONOT INSISTS THAT IF THERE ARE SECRET CLAUSES

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OR ANNEXES THEY SHOULD AT LEAST BE BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE. ITS TERMS MUST BE MADE PUBLIC, NOT LEAKED OUT MORE OR LESS UNREALIABLY TO MEDIA.

9. MAARIV WRITES THAT AGREEMENT IS DESIRABLE BUT ASKS WHETHER PRICE IS NOT TOO HIGH. WHETHER IT IS STEP TOWARD PEACE IS ANOTHER QUESTION. ISRAEL HAS HAD TO MAKE CONCESSIONS ON POINTS WHICH WERE REGARDED AS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. INFILTRATION SEEMS MAIN DANGER JUST NOW. TERRORISTS WILL DOUBTLESS USE OPPORTUNITY TO SET UP PERMANENT BASES NEAR ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS, AND BY ACTING AGAINST THEM ISRAEL WILL ENDANGER ESSENCE OF AGREEMENT. PURSUIT ACROSS LINES, EVEN WITH GREEN LIGHT FROM US, WILL BE AT LEAST TECHNICAL VIOLATION, AND MAY WELL BE USED BY SYRIA AS PRETEXT FOR VIO-LATIONS IN RETURN. MOREOVER, AGREEMENT LEAVES ISRAEL WITH NO FURTHER CONCESSIONS TO BE MADE IN CONTEXT OF EVENTUAL FINAL SETTLEMENT. ANY OPTIMISM ENGENDERED BY AGREEMENT MUST THUS BE QUALIFIED.

10. COMMENT. THESE INITIAL REACTIONS ARE BASED ON RATHER SKETCHY KNOWLEDGE OF DETAILS OF AGREEMENT. DEPENDING ON STORMINESS OF KNESSET DEBATE LATER TODAY, REACTIONS IN NEXT FEW DAYS MAY BE CONSIDERABLY MORE MIXED.
KEATING

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